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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 000197

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE JAMIE LAMORE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [EAID](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [HU](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN COMMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN POLICY
REVIEW

REF: SECSTATE 14097

Classified By: Acting P/E Counselor Jon Martinson, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) In a March 11 written response to reftel demarche, the Hungarian MFA stated that "Hungary welcomes the opportunity to provide its views on Afghanistan and contribute to the development of a new U.S strategy...and we welcome the emerging transatlantic unity and commitment on this issue." The specific MFA non-paper comments follow.

¶2. (C) General Principles:

- Stabilization in Afghanistan has a direct impact on our security. Therefore we have a common interest in tackling the respective challenges together. We must prevent Afghanistan from reverting into chaos and becoming once again a safe haven for terrorists like it was before 9/11. Hungary has a long-term commitment to support international efforts aiming at the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. We welcome the U.S. initiative to review the strategy and to engage all interested contributors in this process.

- We should be realistic in setting our objectives. We must take realities in Afghanistan into account, particularly the local structures (e.g. shura, jirga). Although it is not widely articulated, we should set benchmarks and minimum objectives for a future exit strategy. A surge must aim at creating security conditions that allow the withdrawal of troops and enable an increase in civilian development activities. (Although conditions for an exit are currently not given, criteria should already be drawn up).

- There should be a realistic time frame for achieving our benchmarks, as this would help Allies and other contributing nations make further offers (it would also help communication purposes - Afghanistan is not a "dead well").

- There is a need for a comprehensive approach to the stabilization and reconstruction process that takes into account the civilian and military as well as other aspects related to the rule of law (including law enforcement).

- Greater involvement of, as well as closer cooperation and coordination with, other international players (UN, EU, regional actors) is also required. Consolidation of the situation in Afghanistan is a shared goal and interest and all relevant actors should take their share in the burdens that go along with it. We should deliberately avoid direct linkage between the final outcome of the process in Afghanistan and the future of NATO.

- Public diplomacy aspects are important, both in terms of communication with the Afghan people and with our public, especially in the present situation when we are confronted with the global financial-economic crisis. We should better coordinate our respective messages to the public.
- The regional approach must be pursued more purposefully and more rigorously. There can be no stability without the engagement of Pakistan. Better involvement of countries in the region is desirable, and so is a greater role to be played by Muslim countries.
- We must admit that our presence in Afghanistan be accompanied by a global cultural and religious dialogue. We should be prepared to appropriately handle the differences between the various cultural approaches and avoid creating the impression of wishing to enforce Western values on the Afghan society. It is imperative for the Afghan government to be in a position to promote the reconciliation process.
- Support to the Afghan leadership and to strengthen their legitimacy is crucial as this is the only way to "Afghanisation." In this regard, it is important to provide adequate support to the elections while avoiding even the impression of Western influence in Afghan domestic politics.
- Strengthening the rule of law and setting up efficient Afghan security forces (ANA, ANP) is a prerequisite for long-term success. The ANP still lacks resources and credibility, and continues to face significant challenges. We should use the lessons learned from training and setting up the ANA in order to achieve better results with the ANP.
- Civilian development efforts should be increased. The lack of resources is not the only problem. So is inefficient coordination in their utilization. The role of the UN and the capabilities of the Afghan institutions must be strengthened in order to facilitate more effective use of development funds.
- Numerous efforts have been made to better coordinate and use best practices regarding the functioning of the PRTs. We should not shy away from conducting honest debates on the effectiveness of our structures, and should use lessons learned to make improvements. At the same time, a unified and centrally directed "PRT code" would not be feasible: each and every PRT has to adjust its activities to local circumstances.

13. (C) Hungarian contribution to the stabilization and reconstruction efforts:

- We are currently preparing a decision on the extension of our PRT lead nation role. Hungary has been leading the PRT in Pol-e Khumri, Baghlan province for three years. In 2008, we increased the number of soldiers in the PRT, current military personnel amounting to around 240.
- Hungary has been the lead nation in managing the Kabul International Airport from October 2009 until April 2009.
- We deployed an OMLT to Baghlan province in January 2009, in cooperation with the Ohio National Guard. We are preparing the deployment of a second OMLT in the second half of 2009, possibly to Regional Command South.
- We deployed a Special Operations Task Unit in Wardak province.
- Hungary has offered to contribute to the Election Support Service with a platoon.
- We are also considering other possible contributions (e.g. the helicopter initiative, etc.).
- Currently, 40 percent of the Hungarian ground forces

deployed abroad are serving in Afghanistan. In the past two years, Hungary has increased its military contribution by more than 30 percent.

- The Civilian Representative attached to the PRT is responsible for local coordination of civilian reconstruction projects. In 2008, Hungary extended the civil personnel with a Development Advisor (of Afghan nationality) and administrative staff.

- For the years 2008 and 2009, we provided USD four million available for civilian reconstruction projects, and we intend to extend our support for 2010 and beyond (depending on our financial-economic situation).

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